

Unidentified Building on or near Main Library Site

Herrick Archives Number H 994

Photographs X 2386 (1882) and X 2389 (c 1887) show a white building that appears to have been on, or possibly northwest of, the site of the present main library (Building 050). X 2386 clearly shows a frame building with a pitched roof, with a north-south orientation of the ridge. The main part of the building is tall enough for two stories, possible one story and a loft or hay mow. At the south end is a one-story lean-to with a tall chimney extending through the roof.

No record of any building at this location has been found. The residence of William Neil had stood at this location earlier, but the house burned in 1863 (Lee, Alfred E., *History of the City of Columbus, Capital of Ohio*, New York: Munsell and Company, 1892. Volume I. p. 879.)

It is possible that H 994 was a barn adjacent to the Neil residence, but no reference to any such barn has been found. Moreover, McCracken includes no building at this location in his list of buildings on the campus at the time of purchase (1:11).

For purposes of indexing, the Main Library address (1858 Neil Avenue) is used.

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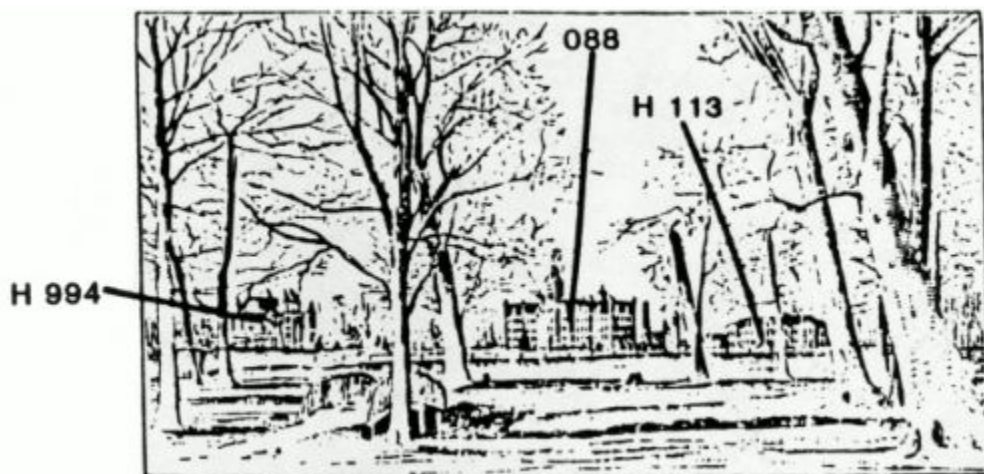
ADDENDUM NO. 1

A further effort has been made to identify Building H 994. This effort brought forth the following additional information:

1. The building is pictured on page 621 of Volume I of the 1889 edition of Henry Howe's *Historical Collections of Ohio* (Columbus: Henry Howe & Son, 1889) and in subsequent editions. The caption indicates that this is an 1888 "photo" by Frank Henry Howe, who was the son of the author.

Oscar Castle Hooper at page 157 in his *History of the City of Columbus, Ohio* (Columbus-Cleveland: Memorial Publishing Co., ([1920?])) and Opha Moore at page 224 in his *History of Franklin County, Ohio* (Topeka-Indianapolis: Historical Publishing Co., 1930) include copies of Howe's photograph with no indication of source.

A reproduction of Howe's photograph, with my building numbers superimposed, follows. This is an engraving, presumably based on a photograph, but the building shown appears to be the same as H 994 in photo X 2386.



See Addendum No. 1

2. The fire which destroyed the Neil farmhouse may have occurred in 1866, rather than in 1863 as reported by Lee (see citation above). This later date is given by William Taylor in his Centennial History of Columbus & Franklin County, Ohio (Chicago-Columbus: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1909 Vol I, p. 514)

3. Since McCracken does not list Building H 994, it is possible that it was gone before he came to the University in November 1886. If this be true, it must follow that Photograph X2389 was taken earlier than 1887 as indicated above. This presents no problem, since the date of X2389 is not known with certainty.

However, if Building H 994 was gone by late 1886, Howe's photograph must have been taken earlier than the 1888 date he attached to it. He states on his title page that all of his photographs were taken in 1886, 1887, & 1888.

4. The files of the University Architect with respect to the construction of the Main Library (Bldg. 050) fail to reveal any evidence of the previous existence or precise location of Building H 994. There is no plot plan, which might, show an old foundation. Neither the specifications nor the estimates of cost mention any demolition or removal of old foundations.

A major hypothesis in this further investigation was that H 994 is actually reported in University records and was overlooked by me in earlier studies. All board of trustee minutes, annual reports, papers of the presidents, and papers of the secretary of the board of trustees through mid-1897 were re-checked without finding any clue to H 994. McCracken's first volume was re-checked page-by-page without finding any clear indication of the existence of H 994. McCracken does indicate on pages 7A and 8A of Volume I that three farm barns were built from 1871-1897, but on page 6A the dates given are 1871-1877. One of these barns was H 105, but I have been unable to identify with any certainty the other two. It is doubtful, for two reasons, that H 994 would have been one of these barns. In the first place, H 994 was remote from most of the farm land which lay west of Neil Avenue. There was, to be sure, some farm land to the south, but this was separated from H 994 by Neil Run, and no evidence has been found of any bridge east of Neil Avenue, except footbridges. Farm land west of the woods, say west of the present McPherson Laboratory (Bldg. 053), and north of Eighteenth Avenue would have been easily accessible from H 994.

A second reason for doubting that H 994 was built by the University as a farm barn is that the University had

initially planned a "campus" of 40 acres south of University Hall (Bldg. 088). There seems to have been a clear distinction between "farm" and "campus," and it seems unlikely that a farm barn would have been erected on the campus, or "lawn" as it was sometimes called. That the "campus" was actually developed and maintained is indicated in a June 1884 report by Farm Superintendent R.w. McFarland that about 40 acres was in the care of the lawnkeeper. (Cope papers in University Archives).

Brief consideration was given to the hypothesis that Building H 994 was the same as Building H 003 (Farm House No. 1), which was directly behind the present Home Economics Building (Bldg. 018). A comparison of Photograph X2336 with photographs known to show H 003 clearly reveals that these were two separate buildings. Also, Map 189-10 indicates that H 003 was approximately 20 feet lower in elevation than university Hall (Bldg. 088), which was at about the same elevation as H 994.

If H 994 was not constructed by the University, it must have been on the land when purchased by the University. As indicated above, McCracken does not so list it. However, this omission may not be significant, since he lists no other barns even though he shows one at Building H 006 on Map 187-06, which he prepared for inclusion in his first volume.

The remainder of this investigation proceeded along the following lines, all of which failed to produce any evidence of the origin and nature of H 994:

1. All available county atlases of the period were searched, since such atlases often included pictures of buildings on selected farms.
2. All available county and city histories were checked.
3. The files of the Ohio State Journal and the Columbus Ohio Daily Salesman were searched For some account of the fire that destroyed the Neil homestead, with the thought that such an account might mention the buildings not destroyed. Since the date of the fire is reported to have been 1863 in some accounts and 1866 in others, the newspapers for both years and the succeeding Januarys were checked.
4. The files of these same papers were searched for the period from March 22, 1870, when the act was passed establishing the college, to the actual selection of the site in October 1870. It was thought that some mention of buildings might be made in letters to the editor or accounts of meetings at which the possible sites were discussed or in a description of the site actually selected.
5. The files of these same newspapers, plus the newly established Columbus Dispatch, were checked from the date of the contracts for the construction of University Hall (Bldg. 088) in 1871 through the date Of the first classes in September 1873. It was thought that Building H 994 might be mentioned in some account of the development of the campus preparatory to the beginning of classes.
6. The correspondence of Governor R.B. Hayes was checked with the thought that some advocate for the selection of the Neil farm as the site of the campus might have mentioned existing buildings.
7. The inventory and other probate court records of the William Neil estate were checked for some reference to buildings on the land.
8. The Ohio Historical Society files of personal papers were checked for:
 - a. All members of the Neil family associated with the ownership and sale of the Neil farm and the settlement of the Neil estate.

b. All owners of the other lands purchased for the campus in 1870-71, and of the William Neil portion of the site back to 1803.

c. All trustees and officials of the University in the 1870's and 1880's.

d. All persons mentioned in newspaper accounts and the other materials searched as having been involved in the debate over the selection of the site.

9. Early records of the Inventory Department to the University were searched in the thought that some equipment might be listed as being in building H 994.

10. All Franklin County maps in the (Ohio Historical Society collection from 1846 through the 1880's were checked, as were the Sanborn insurance maps of 1887 and 1891.

Since all of these efforts were futile. Building H 994 must still be designated as "unidentified."

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March 11, 1986